

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

HUMAN CAPITAL -- A CRITICAL LOOK AT DEVELOPING
BETTER ACQUISITION LEADERS AND DECISION-MAKERS
USING THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

by

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Biography

Lt Col Peter Sandness is assigned to Air University's Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He was most recently assigned to the KC-46 system program office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. As the test program manager for one of the Air Force's top acquisition priorities, he was responsible for planning and executing ground, flight, and live-fire testing using Air Force, Navy, NATO, and Industry assets. In this position, he chaired the Integrated Test Team representing numerous participating test organizations and government oversight agencies. Lieutenant Colonel Sandness grew up in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. He earned his commission in 1997 from the U.S. Air Force Academy where he also played ice hockey for the Falcons. He has served in program manager positions in Air Force Materiel Command, Air Education and Training Command, and at Headquarters Air Force. In 2006, he earned the Air Force Tester of the Year award for his work on the Air and Space Operations Center Weapon System. Deployments to Baghdad, Iraq and to Stuttgart, Germany have provided significant joint operations and interagency experience.

Abstract

Mutual trust between government and industry program leaders, and among their followers as well as key stakeholders, is critical to building high-performing teams and executing effective decision-making on complex defense programs. In a 1996 interview with *Industry Week*, Colin Powell was asked if leadership is recognizable. He replied, “The performance of the organization is the ultimate measure of a leader.”¹ Whether it is amateur or professional team sports, small business startups, or even large government organizations, the unit takes on the personality of its leader. Today’s defense acquisition leaders definitely operate in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments. Because this situation will most likely persist into the future, we need to develop more adaptive leaders capable of handling risk to deal with these environmental constraints. Leaders energize teams, not better processes or more oversight; therefore, Department of Defense (DOD) Program Managers need to elevate their Emotional Intelligence (EI). By being more self-aware of personal leadership strengths and weakness, program leaders will build, and motivate, more collaborative, agile, and productive teams capable of managing successful defense acquisitions. Sharpening the focus on emotional intelligence in DOD’s Acquisition Professional Development Program Management Level II curriculum should create better equipped future defense acquisition leaders. Ultimately, developing EI skills will help the DOD’s next-generation of acquisition program leaders increase their understanding of risk and uncertainty through greater team collaboration, and it will foster more inspired decision-making skills across the enterprise.

Introduction

Leadership in Action

Management consultant Patrick Lencioni concluded his 2002 leadership book with “success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather of embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence.”² Herb Brooks, the head coach of Team USA’s 1980 Olympic gold-medal hockey team, exemplified exactly what Lencioni wanted leaders to do with their teams. Brooks articulated “you can’t be common, the common man goes nowhere; you have to be uncommon.”³ This is one of the greatest leadership gifts presented to us by Coach Brooks. He wanted people to achieve their true potential, and the hockey environment was simply a way to make it happen. Brooks believed anyone could do it, but their self-discipline was the difference maker -- it was a force multiplier. He believed, “On the long, hard road to success, there is one characteristic alone that will determine whether you reach your goal. It is not intelligence. It is not talent. It is not luck. And it is not ‘who you know.’ It is plain old fashion discipline...the essential factor that lifts one man above his fellows in terms of achievement and success.”⁴ To successfully implement a new American hockey training and game-playing paradigm, Brooks intensely demonstrated the power of emotional intelligence using his profound personal understanding of human and organizational behavior. Throughout the Olympic Games preparation, he took well-calculated risks to control the team’s readiness with precision. The team’s unexpected, and passionate, gold medal success in 1980 Olympic tournament will be forever categorized as one of the greatest sports achievements in history. Department of Defense (DOD) Acquisition Program Managers, especially junior workforce members, can leverage Brooks’ leadership example to elevate their emotional intelligence in order to be more successful team leaders in the defense acquisition enterprise.

Future Leadership Vision

On 25 August 2016, Air Force General Paul Selva, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussed organizational innovation during a Center for Strategic and International Studies Military Strategy Forum. During his speech, he specified three tenets required for the Defense Department to become a more effective and more efficient innovative organization. He wants “people who are willing to bring new ideas to the floor, people who are willing to take risks with those ideas, and people who are willing to fail...it’s not that we are risk averse; we are imminently conscious of risk.”⁵

Today’s leaders strive to balance resources across force structure, readiness, and modernization programs. Continuous domestic and international uncertainty requires shaping leaders that can comfortably operate, and lead multi-functional teams, in this dynamic environment. Numerous critical defense acquisition efforts are ongoing. Specifically within the Air Force, major programs such as KC-46, F-35, B-21, Joint STARS Recapitalization, T-X, Presidential Aircraft Replacement, Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent, and several space projects are projected to be very active with their development, production, and sustainment efforts as we progress into 2020 and beyond. With this in mind, program leaders must be shaped and educated now to lead these efforts. The focus should be on our junior workforce because they will be charged with very significant responsibility to lead these major programs. DOD acquisition education and training programs must build program leaders by not simply concentrating on the process, but also helping each member better understand their decision-making capacity. Deliberate development focused on boosting DOD junior acquisition workforce emotional intelligence will be a difference-maker because it will elevate our future leaders’ character,

competence, and credibility. In turn, we should expect to gain better team performance while managing program risk and uncertainty to produce war-winning capabilities.

Argument/Position

The current defense acquisition system is too focused on processes, products, and then its people. It should adjust to be more focused on its people, products, and then processes because it is the power of our program teams that deliver war-winning capabilities using our acquisition processes as their framework. Given the expected intensity of previously mentioned defense acquisition projects, EI should be added to the Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP) Certification Level II Program Management curriculum. Effective DOD acquisition program leadership definitely requires substantial technical intelligence (IQ); however, EI is an under-appreciated difference maker in the defense acquisition enterprise. The DOD needs more program leaders versus program managers. Currently, the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) supplies education to improve EI for DOD officers at the O-5 and O-6 level, and civilian equivalents, through their 400-level courses such as The Program Manager's Course at the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC). However, there is presently not enough EI development for the junior acquisition workforce – DOD officers at the O-3 and O-4 level, and civilian equivalents.

For this research project, I will examine methods to improve junior acquisition program manager leadership and decision-making. Technical subject matter competence is absolutely an important Program Manager (PM) leadership component, but emotional intelligence is just as important, and it should be addressed and developed earlier in a member's professional career. Most of the current DOD Level II PM APDP course material is presented via e-learning modules with limited attention on developing social or critical thinking skills.

According to a Professor of Acquisition Studies at DAU, “Emotional Intelligence is not specifically addressed in our Level II courses. I have not heard specific dialog about emotional intelligence in the courses below the 400-level courses.”⁶ The former Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD/AT&L), Mr. Frank Kendall, wanted to “Improve the Professionalism of the Total Acquisition Workforce” within his Better Buying Power (BBP) 3.0 initiative.⁷ Specifically, this project will address his focus areas of improving our acquisition leaders’ ability “to understand and mitigate technical risk” and “establish stronger professional qualification requirements for all acquisition specialties.”⁸ Recommendations will include ideas for the DAU to consider as they modernize course curriculum and establish stronger professional qualification requirements, which was also a part of Mr. Kendall's BBP 3.0. This project also nicely fits within the Air Force Strategic Plan Human Capital Annex - Developing the Force with innovative, collaborative, and agile education to support emerging mission requirements.

Developing Better Acquisition Leaders and Decision-Makers

Future State of Play

During a 26 September 2016 address at Air University, US Army General David Perkins described our future environment as “unknown, unknowable, and constantly changing.”⁹ I wholeheartedly concur. With this fundamental appreciation for uncertainty, program managers can better communicate, implement, and adapt solution sets to achieve desired programmatic end states. Some program managers strive to create predictable environments to inform their decision-making. They attempt to painstakingly reduce or eliminate all of their risk factors, but this undoubtedly creates delays which prevent the program from making progress. It is highly probable that processes and models will never fully account for every variable teams may encounter because unexpected circumstances always occur throughout a program’s life cycle.

In *On War*, Clausewitz offered that “a sensitive and discriminating judgment is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth” is necessary when dealing with uncertainty.¹⁰ Therefore, a unique mindset is required to comprehensively work with stakeholders to translate resources to achieve end states in volatile arenas. If program managers gain this judgment capacity, then they can have more productive dialogue about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats they confront in their tough programs. As a result, they should become more able to collaborate with their stakeholders to smartly describe the costs and benefits of allocating resources to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, the program manager, and their team, will think deeply about second-, third-, and fourth-order effects to fully appreciate risks before taking action. Educating program managers about the importance of their emotional intelligence will develop more credible and capable leaders who are versatile enough to adapt to perform with the constantly shifting circumstances.

Emotional Intelligence Explained

For this paper, I reviewed legendary psychologist Dr. Seymour Epstein's 1998 book titled, *Constructive Thinking: The Key to Emotional Intelligence*. In the book, he deeply probed into the behavioral science components involved with emotional and intellectual intelligence. During an interview with Dr. Richard Hammett, a founding faculty member from the Emotional Intelligence Training and Research Institute, he succinctly summarized Dr. Epstein's definition of EI as an individual's ability to "think constructively and act wisely."¹¹ Through their work with Dr. Hammett, the Air Force Squadron Officer College faculty developed an EI lesson plan that is currently delivered to every student. In the lesson, they offer the following EI definition: "a confluence of developed skills and abilities to: (1) accurately know yourself in terms of personal strengths and weaknesses, (2) establish and maintain effective and healthy relationships, (3) get along and work productively with others, and (4) deal effectively and healthily with the demands and pressures of daily living. EI requires specific skills to harmonize the cognitive and experiential minds and contribute to effective behavior; it is a continuous and life long process of developing and applying specific skills."¹² It is important to recognize additional perspectives on EI. For example, Travis Bradberry, the author, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* and the co-founder of TalentSmart – a consulting firm that serves more than seventy-five percent of Fortune 500 companies and is a leading provider of emotional intelligence tests, training and certification, views EI as "the 'something' in each of us that is a bit intangible. It affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions to achieve positive results."¹³ Sure, EI is soft-skill subject matter, but it is vital connective tissue due to the role interpersonal dynamics play in executing programs.

Per DOD Directive 5000.01, the Program Manager “is the designated individual with responsibility for and authority to accomplish program objectives for development, production, and sustainment to meet the user's operational needs.”¹⁴ Hence, EI becomes a critical skill component for the PM because he or she must tenaciously lead to ensure their multi-disciplined team is effectively “working together to align the program’s strategies for systems engineering, product support, and test so they are mutually supportive, avoid duplication, and take advantage of available synergies.”¹⁵ Daily task management and team meetings combined with constant preparation for program reviews with senior acquisition officials, responding to media queries, and even crafting congressional testimony require significant coordination with numerous stakeholders. These activities place a serious burden on the PM, but it is their job. Interpersonal skills such as “sociability, sensitivity to others, openness to ideas and suggestions from others, and the ability to motivate and inspire action...” significantly affect unit cohesion, and unity of effort.¹⁶ Therefore, high-functioning EI and personal self-awareness are important for the PM. In fact, DAU’s professor Dr. Owen Gaden suggested, “Working to improve your emotional intelligence promises dramatic improvement of your personal effectiveness in the near term and significantly improved acquisition results in the far term.”¹⁷

Really, More Acquisition Reform?

To improve individual and team performance, continuous change is necessary. As much as we enjoy the status quo, our natural tendency is to pursue new and better things in our personal and professional life. Over time, the defense sector has implemented various management initiatives to elevate effectiveness and efficiency. Since at least the mid-1990s, “reform” has been an integral part of the defense acquisition lexicon. Investments to create agile acquisition...in the spirit of bending the cost curve...to deliver on time, on cost...to rapidly meet

warfighter needs have been made via various formal improvement actions labeled with “Lean,” “1.0,” “2.0,” or other buzzwords, but have we really made our system better over time? Interest on applying resources to make necessary changes has likely proved useful in several cases. For now, we should leverage Mr. Kendall’s BBP 3.0 and the Air Force’s 2015 Strategic Master Plan as guiding documents to establish a focus on our people. Integrating creative change action is a fundamental leadership tenet. Within the science of EI, the inability to productively respond to change, your change orientation, is a focus area that must be evaluated and addressed. Therefore, reform is necessary for growth so it is time to accept change as a component of our corporate defense acquisition organizational culture.

On 9 April 2015, Mr. Kendall released Better Buying Power 3.0 to propel changes to boost DOD acquisition performance. It included a specific item of interest to “Improve the Professionalism of the Total Acquisition Workforce.”¹⁸ Likewise, it is also useful to examine the Air Force’s May 2015 Strategic Master Plan (SMP). This plan highlights agility as a strategic imperative to “enable the Air Force to adapt our capabilities and thinking to assess a dynamic threat environment, outmaneuver adversaries, and support our partners.”¹⁹ The document contains a desire to achieve strategic agility with a goal of creating “Innovative, adaptable, affordable options for Airmen through an agile acquisitions enterprise that takes advantage of technological developments and concept demonstrations/prototypes.”²⁰ To generate action on this line of operation, the SMP offers, as a key contributing objective, that the Air Force should “Implement an individually tailored, generationally appropriate, cutting-edge, life-long approach to education and training.”²¹ Strategic guidance from DOD and Air Force leadership directs action. An education and certification gap exists for the junior acquisition workforce. DAU should add emotional intelligence into its Level II PM curriculum.

Per DAU's "Certification Standards & Core Plus Development Guide," the Level II APDP certification is attained by successfully completing thirty-four hours of resident classroom instruction and 181 hours of distance learning/e-learning modules along with finishing "2 years in program management with cost, schedule, and performance responsibilities."²² According to a senior DAU Professor of Acquisition Studies, "There is more incorporation on critical thinking in our courses. Emotional intelligence is not specifically addressed in our Level II courses."²³ Although critical thinking is helpful for problem-solving, there is limited exposure to the significance of interpersonal skills on the dynamics of team performance. Program leaders must constantly deal with numerous personalities as the various disciplines from engineering, finance, contracts, logistics, and test collide on a daily basis. Creating a culture that promotes trust and openness is the PM's responsibility. The PM cannot fake it; it must be genuine. A leader's self-awareness provides the foundation for this culture to exist, and having strong EI is the core component. It is not the leader's technical intelligence that will simply make it happen. Organizational management expert John Sosik commented in his book, *Leading with Character*, that socialized charismatic leaders "empower others to promote prosocial and ethical collective action" which "results in new heights of individual and collective achievements."²⁴ Including EI into the Level II curriculum can create these leaders who inspire action in tough environments.

Environmental Considerations

Over the past few years, the Budget Control Act, also known as Sequestration, has hindered the DOD's ability to manage resources supporting force structure, readiness, and modernization. Some experts exclaim budget "black hole" challenges will plague the DOD for years to come. Andrew Hunter, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, stated that "a 'six-year trough in weapons systems development' had grown so large that

the new administration would have a hard time solving the problem.”²⁵ Similarly, Mackenzie Eaglen, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, pronounced President Trump’s proposed military spending increases are unlikely because “the plan to pay for that is complete fantasy and dead on arrival.”²⁶ As a rule, with this analysis, the workforce should fold and give up any effort to take action. On the contrary, I think the environment has always been, and will always be, resource constrained. Leaders are charged to make the most of what they have, in both human and financial resources. The expert predictions provide ammunition for digging into how to prepare next-generation PMs to succeed in managing cost, schedule, and performance of the upcoming major programs. Current senior acquisition leaders should proactively mentor the junior workforce and they will reactively make spot corrections when mistakes are made, but it is time to institutionalize EI into DAU’s curriculum. Taking action on this front will require some resources, but the next-generation of acquisition leaders will exhibit different behaviors that should be leveraged; if we ignore them, then we stand to suffer poor performance.

Millennials were born between 1980 and 2000. They are astutely aware of how to communicate using the power of technology, but this can weaken an individual’s ability to interact in public and team situations. Based on research conducted for his article “Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation,” Joel Stein suggested, “Not only do millennials lack the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concerned for others, but they also have trouble even intellectually understanding others’ points of view.”²⁷ This is problematic for a junior PM because, as previously mentioned, the individual must be a team builder with the capability, and capacity to collaborate with a variety of personalities. Therefore, instructing junior PMs about EI, and personal strengths and weaknesses, early in their career makes sense so they can become more self-aware of how to lead themselves, and their team, in a positive direction. Famed

journalist Tom Brokaw, champion of the *Greatest Generation*, loves millennials. He calls them the *Wary Generation* because, “Their great mantra has been: Challenge convention. Find new and better ways of doing things. And so that ethos transcends the wonky people who are inventing new apps and embraces the whole economy.”²⁸ A 2014 Governance Studies at Brookings report, identified that this fine group of talent “will comprise more than one of three adult Americans by 2020 and 75 percent of the workforce by 2025.”²⁹ This future talent needs to be harnessed, cultivated, and then unleashed to lead in our defense acquisition enterprise.

Making the Case for “Soft” Skills Development – The Good, The Bad, The Exciting

The Good

Based on my nearly twenty years of experience as an Air Force acquisition officer, the PM sets the tone for his team’s ability to collectively manage cost, schedule, and performance factors. Above all, the PM is a leader who models the way for his or her team. My most recent assignment as an Air Force Materiel Leader illuminated the importance of our junior workforce using their interpersonal skills to solve problems and communicate up and across the program’s structure. The junior PM force is eager and ready to engage, but they need to operate in a safe environment that will inspire their creativity. Safe means they should be encouraged to try new things, make decisions, and it is okay to fail and flop; they will not be railroaded by their boss when something goes wrong. Active PM leadership is required to coach and vector their energy. In turn, this engagement will inculcate EI attributes into the junior workforce. To further explore EI, I conducted discussions with other current Air Force acquisition leaders.

According to a current Air Force Senior Materiel Leader, PM really means “Personality Matters.”³⁰ This Air Force Colonel learned the axiom from his mentors who are now sitting as Program Executive Officers. He frankly prefers to conduct virtual or in-person face-to-face

discussions to work program issues with stakeholders because body language is a powerful factor in leading large teams. Recent successes using this approach include successfully aligning the team to request Mr. Kendall's approval to proceed through a major milestone as well as conducting negotiations to exercise a multi-billion dollar contract option.³¹

A current Air Force Materiel Leader shared with me strong opinions about DAU's present Level II PM curriculum. The senior acquisition leader had mixed opinions on APDP. He thinks current online content is weak because members do not truly grasp the concepts. Subsequently, when faced with a real-world situation, they lack the ability to construct solutions since they do not have the mental recall to make it happen. In our discussion, he suggested the curriculum should culminate in a resident classroom format similar to the Level III PM capstone requirements which contain group exercises and lectures. The current Level II capstone is a one-week virtual case study format. Our conversation also highlighted how important it is for the leader to be a mentor.³²

Currently, he is experiencing the fruit of his efforts in working with one of his junior PMs who was struggling to synergize his integrated product team. In the acquisition community, a PM is not always a supervisor for many of the team members due to cross-functional representation. In this case, EI can prove to be a valuable tool to work with others. The Materiel Leader spent quality time with his junior PM to talk about attitude and how the power of persuasion can motivate greater contributions from his team, including members who are senior in grade. As a result of his efforts, this junior PM is meeting key suspenses for Preliminary Design Review action items, and now the overall team has the potential to achieve its Critical Design Review ahead of schedule. In this case, the leader did a great job coaching the attributes of flexibility, positive attitude, perseverance, drive, and realizing the bigger mission picture

related to the PM's area of responsibility.³³ Although the Materiel Leader did well, this type of on-the-job EI education is best suited to begin with DAU's Level II PM certification.

The Bad

The DOD Inspector General's 2016 Annual Report included "enabling effective acquisition and contract management" as one of the DOD's top management challenges because programs continue to exceed cost and schedule objectives. The report stated that as of April 2016, there were 1,375 defense acquisition programs. The 2017 Presidential Budget contained \$183.9 billion to fund those programs.³⁴ Analyzing case studies in poor performance illuminates why program managers have struggled, and it provides a method to present items of interest for future success. Poor decision-making is often the result of poor communication among team members. This lack of communication skills springs from a lack of internal and external awareness. If you assume that program leaders have a high technical IQ, can we abstractly state programs suffer protracted schedules with cost growth, and then even result in terminated contracts because of a leader's poor EI? The Air Force's Expeditionary Combat Support System is a case in point. It was a massive effort to integrate hundreds of legacy business systems. The contract was terminated in 2012, and the Air Force got nothing after investing approximately one billion dollars in the program. Senior Air Force acquisition leaders ordered an investigation, and the report concluded that the program failed because of "poor program governance; inappropriate program management tactics, techniques, and procedures; difficulties in creating organizational change; and excessive personnel and organizational churn."³⁵ EI could have made a difference here. I do not want to imply it could have saved the program, but it may have saved precious taxpayer dollars given that a leader, functioning with the power of EI, could have worked relationships to handle demands of managing numerous stakeholder equities. In turn, this could

have triggered risk handling measures to mitigate challenges. Organizational psychologist, Bob Rosen, posited that healthy leaders build healthy organizations. His research discovered that “*who you are influences what you do, and that determines how you perform.*”³⁶ From the outside looking in, this case shows indications of an unhealthy team that suffered from groupthink and a lack of accountability.

The Exciting

Leaders using the power of EI will have the credibility and capability to run effective programs. According to leadership scholars John Sosik and Don Jung, authentic leaders leverage follower strengths, establish a compelling vision and a culture to produce positive organizational outcomes, and demonstrate self-awareness and self-regulated behaviors.³⁷ Professional team sports offer an exciting perspective into the power of EI just like amateur sports, as described in this paper’s introduction with Coach Herb Brooks. Theo Epstein, President of Baseball Operations for the 2016 World Series Champion Chicago Cubs, recalled that early in his career he dismissed the power of a player’s character because he believed the game was purely about hits, runs, and fielding errors. However, after the Cubs won the 2016 World Series, he noted, “But...it’s like every year I did the job, I just developed a greater appreciation for how much the human element matters and how much more you can achieve as a team when you have players who care about winning, care about each other, develop those relationships, and have those conversations. It creates an environment where the sum is greater than the parts.”³⁸ Tom Ricketts, the Cubs owner who hired Epstein in August 2011, remarked, “The reason he’s successful is he has a great leadership style and an eye for talent, but an eye not so much for how a slider breaks but for people who work collaboratively, and he engages them.”³⁹ EI has the power to generate organizations with a culture of pride in performance.

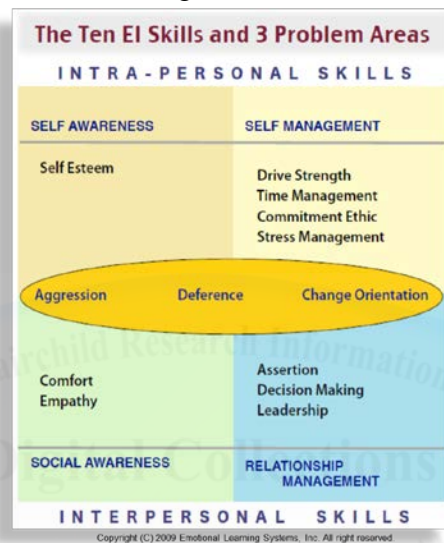
Sosik's and Jung's authentic leader principles encompass EI factors such as self-concept, self-esteem, and personal pride in managing adversity and teamwork. The Cubs' manager, Joe Madden, also spotlighted the role of the team's organizational culture built by Theo Epstein when he said, "He's brilliant, he's sabermetrically [data] inclined...he understands the game. But of all the guys I've met, he's more empathetic than all of them. He understands people."⁴⁰ Epstein did not necessarily gain all these intangible skills during his time as a Yale student. He worked hard at his craft, and learned from his mistakes, to boost these skills. In Angela Duckworth's 2016 book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, she suggests that high achievers utilize "ferocious determination" and they are "unusually resilient and hardworking" in their pursuit of excellence.⁴¹ This personal drive results from the power of EI. Duckworth's research revealed, "Even if some of the things they had to do were boring, or frustrating, or even painful, they wouldn't dream of giving up. Their passion was enduring."⁴² The Air Force's Squadron Officer College has EI embedded into its curriculum. By doing this, it provides an opportunity for insightful self-reflection at an officer's four- to six-year mark.

Spotlighting an EI Development Benchmark

Using over thirty years of educational research, Board certified psychologists Dr. Darwin Nelson and Dr. Gary Low published the Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) in 1999. Nelson and Low wanted people to learn more about themselves and integrate better thinking and behavior into their personal and professional lives. The ESAP is not a test. It is an assessment tool to promote greater self-awareness to spotlight areas for improvement. The personal profile that is generated as a result of completing the instrument provides a score for thirteen skill areas. Ten are EI skills while three are focused on potential problem areas of aggression, deference, and change orientation (see Figure 1). Nelson and Low believed the ESAP produced real learning.

They said, “In essence, the discussion of your ESAP results is like having a positive conversation with yourself about how you are now as a person and what you are willing to do to reach high levels of achievement and personal happiness. Few people stop long enough to really think about their behavior and fewer still actually focus energy on learning new and better ways to think, express their emotions, and choose their behaviors.”⁴³

Figure 1⁴⁴



In 2009, the Air Force Squadron Officer College started delivering EI and the ESAP during an instructional period during the five-week curriculum. Therefore, as a part of their experience, each officer received insight into the specific EI areas he or she could learn/develop, strengthen, or enhance. In a similar fashion, DAU could offer this same instruction to their students during their Level II PM capstone certification course. The Appendix to this paper analyzes data from two classes that recently completed Squadron Officer School. It compares and contrasts 1,115 total student scores, and offers a breakdown using Distinguished Graduates and Program Managers as additional groups to examine EI strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, in the Appendix, I will define ESAP’s focus areas, and also give my input on

important EI skills that a PM should have as they become program leaders. The ESAP is an example of a powerful tool that can be used for maturing our future defense acquisition PMs.

Assessing Views of Others

Defense Acquisition University may believe they are addressing the emotional dimensions of program management through their numerous online and resident courses, but there is no deliberate focus on EI until a PM reaches at least Level III and higher. A senior DAU professor conveyed, “As an acquisition and program management training organization, getting ‘soft’ skills training and assessments into our offerings here has been more difficult. As far as I know there are no EI certified faculty outside of our [DSMC] organization. I completely agree that EQ [EI] should be offered at a lower level so our mid-level program managers can use it ‘on the way up’ in their careers.”⁴⁵

Adam Grant, a professor of management and psychology at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business, published an article in *The Atlantic* in 2014. In the “Dark Side of Emotional Intelligence,” he stated that EI is good when used for motivation, but evil when it is used to manipulate others. Grant does claim there are jobs where EI is beneficial. In research studies, salespeople and counselors “all excelled at their jobs when they knew how to read and regulate emotions--they were able to deal more effectively with stressful situations and provide service with a smile.”⁴⁶ To relate with multi-disciplined personnel across their team, PMs need to be influential leaders, and this actually requires skills affiliated with sales and counseling to motivate action. Grant conceded that people are not always using their EI power to manipulate situations. His conclusion offered that rather than thinking about EI as a problem solving panacea, “we need to think more carefully about where and when it matters.”⁴⁷ I agree.

In some enterprises, it is easy to take a dismissive viewpoint regarding the power of EI. However, Tom Ricketts, the Chicago Cubs owner, remarked there is tremendous potential with focusing on soft skills. Regarding Theo Epstein's philosophy on teamwork and player character, he said, "There's an element of those soft skills that would cause some people on the baseball side to roll their eyes, because he's very concerned about the character of players he signs and the atmosphere in the clubhouse. Is the player going to be additive or does he subtract? What I see is someone who treats people well."⁴⁸ Solid program leadership functions in the same manner. A PM should focus on elevating the team's character. By forming this bedrock foundation, teams can wisely collaborate to handle cost, schedule, and performance risk factors. The defense acquisition community needs to embrace EI as a force for good.

Recommendations

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., an entrepreneurial giant during the 20th Century, said "If you want to succeed, you should strike out on new paths rather than travel the worn paths of accepted success."⁴⁹ General Selva called for more innovative leadership, and more willingness to lean forward and take risks. Therefore, it is time to challenge the status quo regarding Level II PM Certification to improve junior acquisition program manager leadership and decision-making. Most of the current Level II course material is presented via point-click e-learning modules with no attention on developing social awareness skills. Given its recent criticisms about the enormous costs of the F-35 and Air Force One replacement programs, President Trump's Administration should welcome new ideas to establish stronger professional acquisition qualification requirements and to modernize DAU course curriculum. Technical subject matter competence remains an important PM leadership component, but emotional intelligence should be developed early on so it must be added to the Level II PM core certification curriculum. Soft

skills can certainly bolster a PM's ability to use his or her team to identify and handle risk. Through the Better Buying Power 3.0 initiative, Mr. Kendall wanted to improve a program leader's capacity to understand and mitigate technical risk so this course of action will benefit this particular focus area.

Potential Implementation Pitfalls

If DAU strives to implement EI into its curriculum, it is fair and reasonable to highlight it will be difficult to measure the return on investment due to the nature of it being a soft skill. However, obstacles to implementation should not distract us from the benefits of building healthy individuals and teams. We should attempt to work through barriers. Blending a soft, qualitative concept that can be interpreted differently by people into a sound set of recommendations which includes limited quantitative data to truly measure ROI can hardly seem like a worthwhile investment effort. Naysayers should ask how do we track and measure the performance and effectiveness of our program managers today. I think we lean too much on the total count of APDP certified members as a performance indicator. However, this tells us nothing about a PM's effectiveness in the trenches of managing cost, schedule, and performance to deliver weapon systems. The power of EI exists in expanding an individual's self-awareness of how they interact and react to their environments. Leaders can absorb an assessment activity similar to the Air Force SOC program to learn and grow, and then adapt their behavior accordingly. As we know, the current and future environment is unpredictable, so it is really difficult to predict success. We need to train and equip our PM leaders to deal with the uncertainties they will confront.

The DSMC which includes EI lessons into its Program Manager's Course has a couple of EI trained professors. DAU can take a similar approach to train a couple of their Level II PM

course instructors, and perform initial implementation actions using an assessment activity similar to how the Air Force SOC implemented its EI curriculum. Furthermore, there is the possibility to hire EI consultants to deliver these assessment and share the data for review by members. This data can be logged at the Level II capstone course, and then pulled out again for another assessment when the member returns for their Level III capstone certification. This implementation format demonstrates systematic intent to institutionalize EI into individual and organizational levels of the defense acquisition enterprise.

Although I do not have all the costs and schedules to recommend a full-scale implementation to create, implement, and maintain a talent management system, I will offer that the Air Force and Army War Colleges have administered a Leadership Assessment that involves 360-degree feedback along with a self-awareness module, and a consultation with a behavioral psychologist to understand the results. Since 2007, this assessment has been provided to over 2,500 Air Force and Army War College students.⁵⁰ DAU has an existing partnership with the Air War College it can leverage to learn more about how this program was implemented.

Implications If We Ignore EI

After winning the 2016 World Series, Theo Epstein passionately expressed, “I love being around these players and the people I work with. It’s fun to come to work every day.”⁵¹ This is the mentality we want our acquisition leaders to have, and it is the type of productive work environment they can create. In essence, the PM should strive for the “social multiplier” effect. Duckworth submits that organizational performance is at its best when “one person’s grit enhances the grit of the others, which in turn inspires more grit in that person, and so on, without end.”⁵² With this teamwork environment, a program team can crush any challenge they encounter. Millennials easily connect with technology to maximize their creativity, but attachment to mobile devices provides a limitation because they are not “honing their ability to

read and interpret social cues—a key skill even in today's increasingly digital world.”⁵³

Exposing our junior PMs to EI principles during Level II PM certification is a worthwhile investment. By being aware of their personality strengths and weaknesses, these future major program PMs will become more credible and capable leaders. As a result, they will push their teams to positively affect the DOD’s poor cost and schedule performance trend. In essence, the DOD will create what Liz Wiseman called *Multipliers* – someone who is “able to understand and solve hard problems rapidly, achieve its goals, and adapt and increase capacity over time.”⁵⁴

Concluding Thoughts

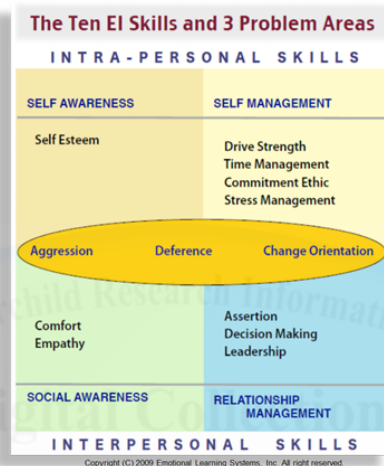
In his 2002 book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, Patrick Lencioni stated, “The ultimate dysfunction of a team is the tendency of members to care about something other than the collective goals of the group.”⁵⁵ Team sports offer exciting EI leadership examples for us to leverage. During his time with the 1980 Olympic hockey team, I think Coach Brooks demonstrated Sosik’s character virtue of temperance with his consistent gratitude for how hard the players worked to elevate their strength and spirit to execute his new, team-oriented system. Furthermore, he always projected optimism and hope that the team could achieve marvelous results if they continued to stick together and push each other. Brooks offered the following thoughts about building effective teams. He said, “It’s up to the coach to create an environment which has a high level of comradeship, at all times reinforcing team concepts...and the power that can be attained when working together. The team reflects your values, your instincts, your philosophies....”⁵⁶ In effect, as previously stated, “Personality Matters!” Coach Brooks effectively injected the power of synergy by ensuring each player understood his role, and how it fit into the team’s system. Program managers must comfortably form high-performing teams with this same mindset to make great things happen. Understanding

and developing EI will be a tremendous leadership asset for producing future defense acquisition success.

Our current and next-generation of DOD acquisition program managers must be creative and fearless leaders who are willing to challenge the status quo and take risks to solve tough problems. We need leaders who are willing to expand their comfort zones to propel their teams to new heights. As a result, we will achieve impressive results for our Nation by “delivering innovative and cost-effective war-winning capabilities.”⁵⁷ Coach Brooks remarked that “leadership is all about change, and all about transforming organizations so that creativity and innovation can thrive.”⁵⁸ Our DOD program managers should embrace the leadership models of Coach Herb Brooks and Theo Epstein. Injecting EI into the Acquisition Professional Development Level II Program Management certification curriculum will improve the next-generation of acquisition leaders’ ability to lead major programs well into the next decade.

Appendix: Emotional Skills Profile Assessment (ESAP)

The purpose of this appendix is to explain EI skills and potential problems areas. These items are a part of the ESAP. Therefore, definitions of each item are provided as they exist in the ESAP report. The second section of the appendix offers analysis of the data from two Squadron Officer School classes that completed the ESAP in order to highlight the utility of the ESAP as a tool to stimulate self-awareness to learn, understand, and develop you EI skills.



- Definitions for each of the 10 EI skills as defined in the ESAP Personal Profile.⁵⁹
Emotional Intelligence is a developing process of identifying, learning, understanding, feeling and expressing human emotions in ways that are healthy and constructive. Emotional skills are key to personal happiness, healthy relationships, and personally meaningful careers.

Intrapersonal Skills

Self-Awareness:

Self-Esteem – The ability, belief, and skill to view self as positive, competent, and successful in achieving personal goals. Self Esteem is reflected in genuine self-confidence, a high regard for self and others, and self-worth. It includes the powerful personal belief system about self, personal competence, and value of self, and it is maintained daily by experiencing success in effective dealing with self, others, and the demands of life and work.

Self-Management:

Drive Strength – The ability to effectively direct personal energy and

motivation to achieve personal, career, and life goals. It involves the learning of specific strategies and processes of action goal setting that a person can apply and practice on a daily basis in personal, career, and life projects.

Time Management – The ability to organize tasks into a personally productive time schedule and use time effectively for task completion. It involves the learning and using of effective skills and brings harmony to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors on a daily basis in the pursuit of personal, career, and life goals.

Commitment Ethic – The ability to complete tasks, projects, assignments, and personal responsibilities in a dependable and successful manner, even in difficult circumstances. It is reflected by an inner-directed, self-motivated, and persistent effort to complete projects regardless of other distractions and difficulties.

Stress Management – The ability and skill to choose and exercise healthy self-control and self-management in response to stressful events. It involves self-regulation of emotional intensity and the use of relaxation and cognitively derived coping strategies in difficult and high stress situations.

Interpersonal Skills

Social Awareness:

Comfort – The ability to judge appropriate social, emotional, and physical distance and verbal and non-verbal interactions with others and to impact and influence others in positive ways. Comfort enables a person to be confident, spontaneous, and relaxed with others in a variety of situations.

Empathy – The ability to accurately understand and constructively respond to the expressed feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and needs of others. Accurate empathy involves active listening in a patient, compassionate, and non-judgmental manner and communication back to the person the feelings of being heard, understood, and accepted as a person.

Relationship Management:

Assertion – The ability to clearly and honestly communicate personal thoughts and feelings to another person in a comfortable, direct, appropriate, and straightforward manner. Assertive communication is a positive way of talking to people and expressing thoughts and feelings in a way that promotes understanding, caring, and respect.

Decision-Making – The ability to plan, formulate, initiate, and implement effective problem solving procedures. It is a key emotional skill essential for

formulating and seeing choices in problem situations and for involving others in the solution to problems and conflicts.

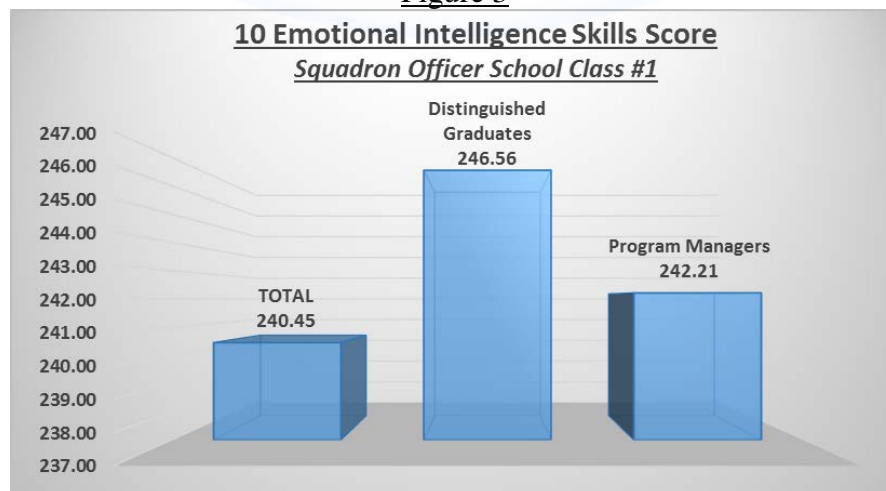
Leadership – The ability to positively impact, persuade, influence others, and in general make a positive difference. It is a key emotional skill essential for establishing and providing vision, momentum, and direction for others in ways that are valued and respected.

Figure 2⁶⁰

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: EI TOTAL SCORE				
My Current Score:	0	169	179	264
I need to (check one)	_____ Learn/Develop	_____ Strengthen	_____ Enhance	_____ 330

- The total score is a sum of the ten individual EI skills identified in the ESAP assessment. It is an indicator of what a person can do to increase their professional achievement and personal well-being. The personal profile will breakout a score for each of the ten areas, and it will also offer a specific Learn/Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance scoring system.
- Figure 3 and 4 provide data views for each Squadron Officer School class that was examined. It is broken out by the total class, distinguished graduate (DG), and the PM/63A category.
- How many individuals are in Class #1, and a part of each category?
Total = 556; DG = 52; PM/63A = 15. No PMs were DGs in Class #1. See Figure 3.

Figure 3



- What does this data tell us for EI skills to Learn/Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance?

SOS 17C											10 EI Skills TOTAL
TOTAL	18.77697842	17.79856115	16.41546763	17.32194245	36.89928058	16.9028777	19.7823741	24.4676259	36.54136691	35.54136691	240.45
DG	19.80769231	16.82692308	17.76923077	18.71153846	38.88461538	18.01923077	20.57692308	25.61538462	36.5	33.84615385	246.56
PM/63A	18.92857143	19.21428571	16.92857143	17.85714286	37.21428571	16.5	19.5	22.71428571	37.57142857	35.78571429	242.21

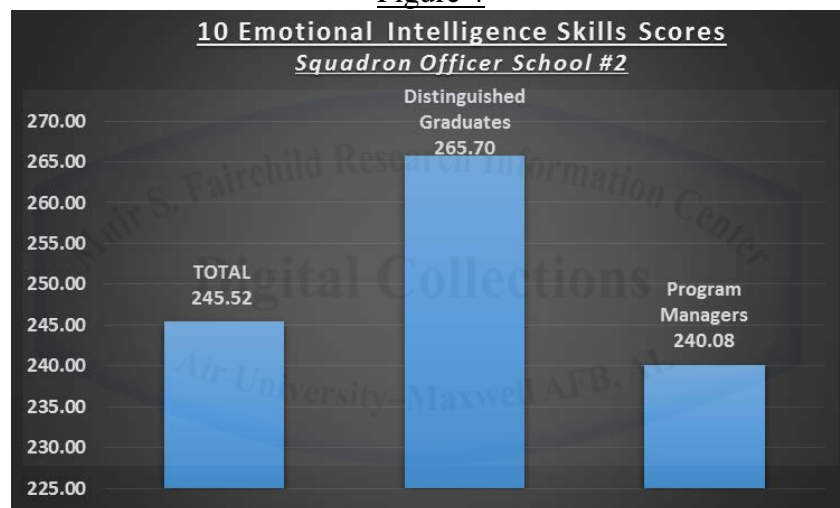
DGs should have better EI skills since they are at the top of their class. Drive strength, commitment ethic, comfort, self-esteem, and time management were standout EI skill strengths. I think these are expected strengths for overachievers. Based on their scores, Empathy is a skill area that this DG group could work to strengthen. Empathy is a critical skills for team leaders.

For the PM group, they showed similar EI skill strengths to the DG group. However, they did have better empathy scores. Empathy is a vital function of a PM as they work to integrate multi-functional teams to work cost, schedule, and performance risk items. The PMs weakness areas were in decision-making and leadership. To a degree, this weakness makes sense because the junior PMs do rely on supervisors and the ranking senior PM to make most decisions. Of note, this is the power of the ESAP. It points out for these junior PMs that they need to focus on these skill areas so they can strengthen their performance.

- How many individuals are in Class #2, and a part of each category?

Total = 559; DG = 53; PM = 13. No PMs were a DG in Class #2. See Figure 4.

Figure 4



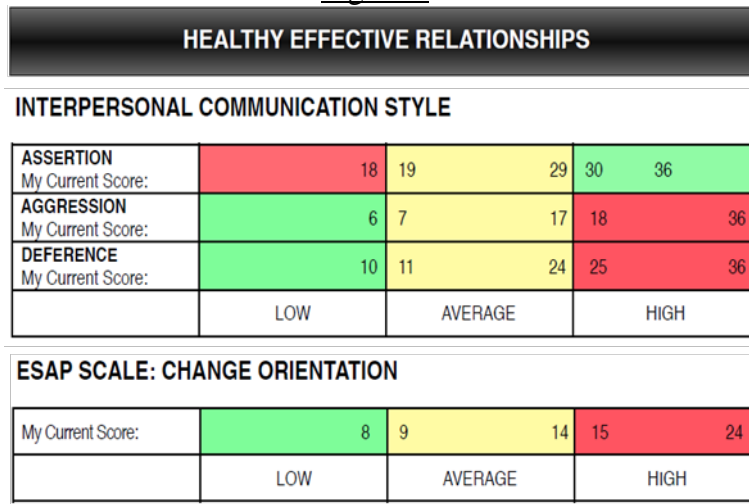
- What does this data tell us for EI skills to Learn/Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance?

SOS 17D											10 EI Skills TOTAL
TOTAL	19.12522361	18.02862254	16.89087657	17.58318426	38.3255814	17.44722719	20.30053667	25.14490161	36.89624329	35.7817531	245.52
DG	20.62	18	18.8	19.64	42.12	19.28	21.24	26.84	40.7	38.46	265.70
PM/63A	19.07692308	17.76923077	16.84615385	18.69230769	38.69230769	17.15384615	19.84615385	26.23076923	32.69230769	33.0769231	240.08

The DGs in this group exhibited a much higher EI score than their peers. They lean to enhancing versus strengthening from a total score perspective. Drive strength, decision-making, self-esteem, time management, and stress management were standout EI skill strengths. Based on their scores, Empathy is also a skill area that this DG group could work to strengthen.

For the PM group, they showed a need to strengthen all of their EI skills. Of interest is their lower scores in self-esteem and stress management versus their peer group.

Figure 5⁶¹



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- Definition of healthy effective relationships and why ESAP spotlights this area (Figure 5).⁶²

Relationships are the major source of happiness and satisfaction in our lives. The quality of human relationships is significantly affected by communication style and emotional self-control. The supportive skills essential in healthy relationships are Anger Management and Anxiety Management. Intense and prolonged anger becomes destructive in relationships. Fear (anxiety and stress) contributes to ineffective communication and a tendency to avoid confronting and solving problems. Assertion is the preferred and most constructive communication style.

Using Figure 5 can help understand your personal style. High Assertion indicates a skilled and constructive style of communication. High Aggression indicates a need to develop the emotional self-control skill of anger management, increase assertive communication, and learn conflict resolution skills. High Deference indicates a need to develop anxiety management and stress management skills. The most constructive communication style for initiating and maintaining healthy and effective relationships would be High Assertion (skilled communication), low Aggression, and low Deference. Low scores on Aggression and Deference would be positive and indicate a high level of emotional self-control and an ability to communicate effectively in difficult situations. High levels of Aggression and Deference would suggest that the strong emotions of anger and anxiety (fear) may interfere and/or block effective communication.

- Definition of the three potential problem areas as described in the ESAP Personal Profile.

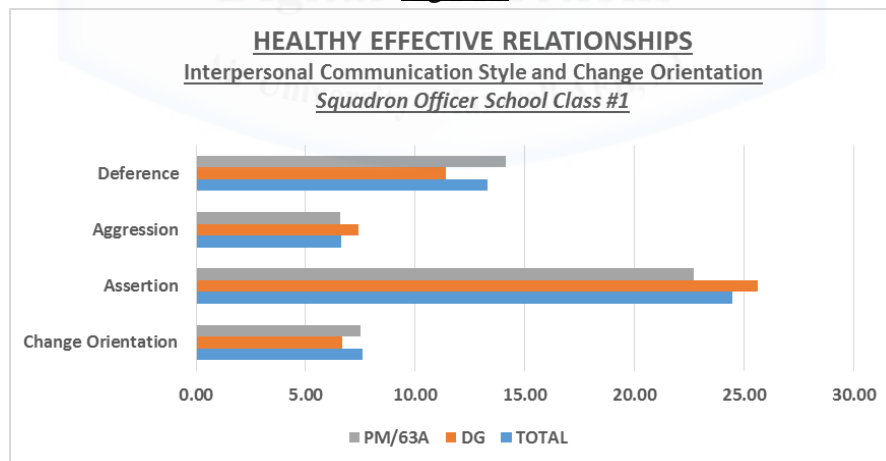
Aggression – A measure of the degree to which an individual employs a personal communication style or pattern that violates, overpowers, dominates, or discredits another person's rights, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Aggression is reflected in communication that is too strong and overpowering and results in bad feelings and negative outcomes.

Deference – A measure of the degree to which an individual employs a personal communication style or pattern that is indirect, self-inhibiting, self-denying, and ineffectual for the accurate expression of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. It is reflected in communication that is too weak, indirect, or ambiguous and results in unclear and/or mixed messages. Fear control and management is essential to the healthy and constructive expression of fear, worry, and anxiety in relationship to self and others.

Change Orientation – A measure of the degree to which an individual is satisfied and the magnitude of change needed or desired for developing personal and professional effectiveness. It includes the degree to which a person is motivated and ready for change. Positive personal change is a key emotional skill essential to healthy change and development throughout life.

- What does Class #1 data illuminate for skills to Learn/Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance? By looking at Figure 6 and comparing it to the score breakdown depicted in Figure 5, I think the low aggression and change orientation scores are very positive for all groups. It shows a sense of level-headed behavior. The PMs should work to strengthen their assertion and deference skills, and I think their environment may create the lower feelings in this category. Assertion and direction communication are particularly important for a PM because a team needs to understand their collective direction and individual taskings. Additionally, PMs work with industry and need to be clear with how that relationship is managed from a contract standpoint, but also from a peer-to-peer PM perspective.

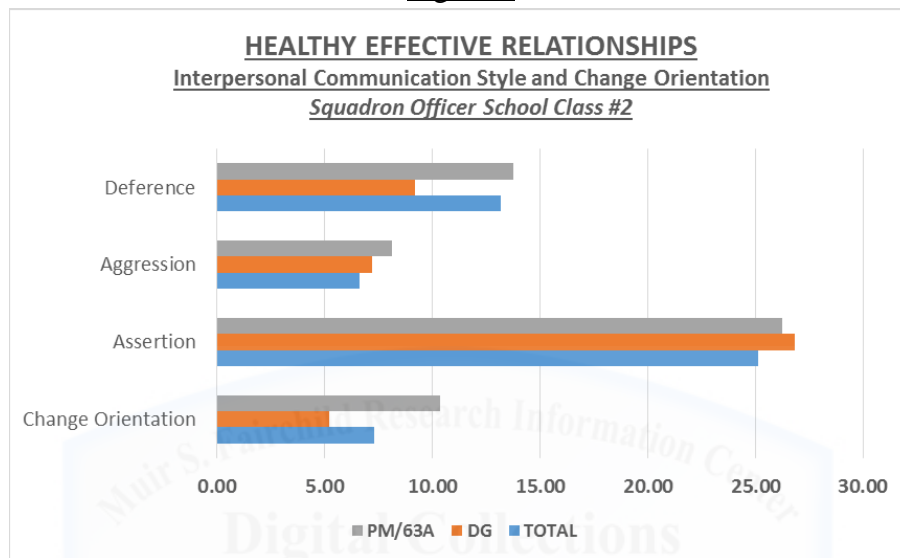
Figure 6



SOS 17C				
TOTAL	7.59	24.47	6.62	13.29
DG	6.65	25.62	7.42	11.40
PM/63A	7.50	22.71	6.57	14.14

- What the data illuminates for skills to Learn/Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance in Class #2
Using Figure 7 helps showcase that this group exhibits similar tendencies to Class #1. The DGs in this class have a much lower score in deference and change orientation. That is a positive attribute and something they want to enhance going forward. Aggression and assertion are again good areas for each group. For the PMs, they need to focus on working to examine their change orientation and deference scores. Knowledge about possible weak spots can only make them better personally and professionally in the future.

Figure 7



SOS 17D				
TOTAL	7.32	25.14	6.61	13.21
DG	5.24	26.84	7.22	9.18
PM/63A	10.38	26.23	8.15	13.77

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⁵³ Debra Donston-Miller, “Workforce 2020: What You Need To Know Now,” *Forbes*, 05 May 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/workday/2016/05/05/workforce-2020-what-you-need-to-know-now/#8e9a7fa7d547>

⁵⁴ Liz Wiseman with Greg McKeown. *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 230.

⁵⁵ Patrick Lencioni. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, 2002, 216.

⁵⁶ Ross Bernstein. *America’s Coach Life Lessons & Wisdom for Gold Medal Business: A Biographical Journey of the Late Hockey Icon Herb Brooks*, New Brighton, MN: Bernstein Books LLC, 2006, 52.

⁵⁷ *Air Force Materiel Command Strategic Plan*, 2016, 2.

⁵⁸ Ross Bernstein. *America’s Coach Life Lessons & Wisdom for Gold Medal Business: A Biographical Journey of the Late Hockey Icon Herb Brooks*, New Brighton, MN: Bernstein Books LLC, 2006, 126.

⁵⁹ The definitions for each of the 10 EI skills and 3 problem areas are directly pulled from the ESAP Personal Profile Report that a person receives after completing the ESAP. I also reviewed Darwin Nelson, Ph.D., Gary Low, Ph.D., and Richard Hammett, Ed.D. Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) Profile Report Template. Emotional Learning Systems, Inc. 2009.

⁶⁰ Darwin Nelson, Ph.D., Gary Low, Ph.D., and Richard Hammett, Ed.D. Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) Profile Report Template. Emotional Learning Systems, Inc. 2009, 14.

⁶¹ Darwin Nelson, Ph.D., Gary Low, Ph.D., and Richard Hammett, Ed.D. Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) Profile Report Template. Emotional Learning Systems, Inc. 2009, 15-16.

⁶² Darwin Nelson, Ph.D., Gary Low, Ph.D., and Richard Hammett, Ed.D. Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) Profile Report Template. Emotional Learning Systems, Inc. 2009, 15.